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# The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 274. MAY, 1930.

## TRUTH — LIBERTY — RELIGION.

**"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."**
—John 4 : 24.

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## Editorial.

### Remonstrant Synod Centenary.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found details of a service to be held at Dunmurry to mark the centenary of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster. We feel that such an important event should receive more adequate recognition than an afternoon service in one of our country churches. Surely a united service in Belfast, say in the Ulster Hall, followed by a well advertised public meeting on the Monday evening, at which the principles of Non-Subscription could be clearly set forth, would be more worthy of this important occasion? We cannot imagine our orthodox friends allowing such an important occasion to pass without letting the outside public know all about it. And isn't this just the occasion to spread our cherished principle of Non-Subscription and to show its bearing on religious and social life?

However the arrangements have now been made and it is too late to alter them. It is to be hoped that the Dunmurry Church will be crowded on May 25th—indeed this is the least we can expect seeing that there are nearly three thousand worshippers definitely connected with the Non-Subscribing Church to say nothing of interested members of the outside public.

### Our Church and Public Questions.

Why is the voice of our Church heard so seldom in connection with vital social and economic questions? As a Church we are interested in them—our liberal religious faith demands this—but when it comes to publicly stating our views we seem to adopt a "hush, hush policy." Immediately a social, political or economic question assumes importance, other religious denominations come forward with resolutions embodying their attitude so that the outside public may be officially informed, but one usually waits in vain for some official pronouncement from the Non-Subscribing Church. Yet our attitude to life is such that we should be the first religious denomination and not the last, to officially state our views on matters of public importance. Instead of being surprised at the recent resolution passed by the General Purposes Committee on the Education Bill and equally surprised at the press publicity, we should have confidently expected both. Our faith demands that we should officially express ourselves on important social questions as soon as the occasion arises. It is to be hoped that the future will see our Church well to the front in these matters.

### Russia.

In the last issue we suggested that the accounts of religious persecution in Russia were rather overdrawn and that deep-seated religious feelings were being exploited. Several letters, with supporting press cuttings have come to hand which suggest the opposite. In addition most ministers have been circularised by the Christian Protest Movement, with invitations to enrol either as supporters or as speakers. However we still suggest that our note of warning was needed and we now have the support of the British Ambassador's report. Here are a few extracts taken from the gist of the report received from the British Ambassador at Moscow.

"There is no religious persecution in Russia in the strict sense of the term.—

No case could be discovered of the punishment of a priest, or any other person, for the practice of the Christian or any other religion, or for the performance or observance of religious rites and services. Priests have been shot for counter-revolutionary crimes. Other foreign diplomatists have made similar inquiries with the same results. The people are free to worship and to be baptised, married and buried in Christian fashion and there is similar liberty for Jews and Mohammedans.—Churches have been destroyed or taken over for use as schools or clubs where they were not sufficiently used for worship. Otherwise the Churches are open and the ceremonies are as magnificent as ever."

We are not suggesting for one moment that from the religious point of view everything is as it should be in Russia but we are definitely of the opinion that there has been gross exaggeration. Surely it is bad enough to know the facts, which are briefly that the present rulers in Russia are determined to abolish Christianity because it conflicts with the fundamental principles of Communism and that, with this aim in view, they have made it illegal to give religious instruction to children under eighteen (all over this age may legally receive religious instruction) surely these facts are bad enough without the addition of unfounded atrocity stories ?

It is interesting to note that the British Embassy in Moscow is "greatly concerned about the stream of falsehoods and inaccuracies that reaches the English press from Riga. These stories are reproduced in the Russain Press as evidence of hostility to Russia."

**The Naval Treaty.**

The Disarmament Conference which Mr. MacDonald hoped would "agree upon an equilibrium in strengths, and competitive building, reduce expenditure on ships, and bring down the fleets in size," has broken up with none of the objects substantially achieved. True, the Conference has not been a failure, but it has been rather disappointing. Instead of a five power pact we have a three power pact, and each of these three powers reserves to itself the right to increase its strength beyond the figure laid down in the treaty. In other words, America, Great Britain and Japan have agreed to limitation, but with a side glance at France and Italy, have decided that they shall please themselves regarding the size of their navies. The Premier's statement that this reservation claimed by each power is not intended to furnish an easy way round the treaty does little more than draw attention to the fact that there is an easy way round, and that in this matter each nation's word must not be expected to be its bond. However, we may be thankful that a start has been made. Though this "disarmament" Conference has failed to abolish a single weapon of war, it has agreed to a naval holiday until 1936. For this we may be thankful, and hope that the next "disarmament" Conference will be worthy of its name by abolishing some of our barbaric engines of destruction.

**Bishop Barnes Again.**

Bishop Barnes's recently expressed determination to go to prison if necessary "for the cause of reformed religion" has caused another Anglican Church "crisis," and may well be a definite step towards disestablishment. One cannot help but sympathise with the Bishop. He breaks the law if he disobeys the Chancery Division order to admit and licence to the benefice of St. Aidan's the Rev. G. D. Simmonds, and yet he breaks the law, or at least "aids and abets" if he complies with the order because the proposed incumbent is a devotee of the new prayer book which Parliment has twice refused to legalise.

A few very interesting features arise from this case. Why have the Anglo-Catholics, who accept the doctrine of the Church's spiritual independence, taken the Bishop to law ? How is the Bishop to put down illegal practices if he is denied the authority to do it ? Has Bishop Barnes no authority to enforce the use of the legal prayer book and prohibit the illegal prayer book ?

Bishop Barnes's appeal to the incumbents to remember that they had sworn canonical obedience to their bishop leaves us rather cold. The Bishop himself has sworn an oath, not to an earthly authority, but to a Heavenly Authority, regarding certain creeds and dogmas, but he has departed from it. When the rebel incumbents plead "conscience" they only follow the

Bishop himself. It will be extremely interesting to see what the result of this latest "crisis" will be.

**The Education Bill.**

The present Education Amending Bill is, as must be expected in this multi-sectarian province, with its conflicting religious loyalties, causing much controversy. The situation bristles with difficulties even from the Protestant point of view. For instance, is it possible to expect that the "simple Bible teaching" will remain uncoloured by the views of the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, etc., through whom it is coming? Yet this amending Bill is aimed at the preventing of denominational education.

Again, one cannot help but appreciate the Roman Catholic point of view no matter how much one may disagree with it. Obviously the imparting of "simple Bible teaching" is not in accordance with Roman Catholic principles. We may believe these principles to be wrong, but the point is that many conscientious people believe them to be right. This is the situation created by the present Bill. We have no solution to offer. We cannot agree with Prof. Henry, who, in a letter to the Press, describes the Bill as "almost wholly bad." A reply to this letter by the Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A., seems to correctly interpret the attitude of those thinking Protestants who realise all the difficulties involved, and are grateful for even a partial solution. We quote from this letter, which appeared in the Northern Whig, 11th April,

> "Simple Bible teaching represents the highest common measure of agreement on which all Protestant citizens, of whatever sect, are formally united. The clause does all that an Act of Parliament can do to secure that, and that only, in our mixed religious society. As for the Roman Catholics, they, I think, put themselves beyond the pale in this matter, because they utterly refuse to bring their schools within a common public system on any terms, and to this extent, fail to fulfil the conditions of good and equal citizenship. . . It would therefore be otiose and supererogatory for Parliament to secure for them the teaching which accords with their views in a public scheme from which they determinedly exclude themselves."

## "JUST AND STATESMANLIKE."

### Non-Subscribing Church Welcomes Education Bill

The following resolution was passed at a meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland:—

> "That this meeting of the General Purposes Committee of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland cordially approves Clause IV. and also Clause V. of the Education Bill (Northern Ireland) in regard to Bible instruction, and notes with satisfaction that no teacher in any school provided by or transferred to an education authority may be required as a condition of appointment, or holding office, to teach any religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination."

The Committee is of opinion that these clauses embody a just and statesmanlike policy in a province which includes citizens of so many different denominations and creeds, of one mind only in their common reverence for the Christian Scriptures. The Committee sincerely hopes that the Government of Northern Ireland may succeed in placing these clauses on the Statute Book.

Copy of the resolution was directed to be sent to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education.—"The Northern Whig," 19/4/20.

## A Prayer for every Morning.

I desire, O God, this day most earnestly to please Thee; to do Thy will in each several thing which Thou shalt give me to do; to bear each thing which Thou shalt allow to befall me contrary to my will meekly, humbly, patiently, as a gift from Thee to subdue selfwill in me; and to make Thy will wholly mine.

What I do make me do simply as Thy child; let me be, throughout the day, as a child in his loving father's presence, ever looking up to Thee. May I love Thee for all Thy love. May I thank Thee, if not in words, yet in my heart, for each gift of Thy love, for each comfort which Thou allowest me day by day.

—EDWARD BOUVERIE PUSEY.

# Sudden Conversion.

By Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D.

## I.—The Case Stated.

Dean Inge has told us that he has never met a case remotely resembling the sudden conversions Wesleyans are led to expect. His experience in this respect is dissimilar to that of many other observers. Almost everyone knows some person whose life has appeared to be suddenly changed through some religious experience. Among our evangelical forefathers these cases were assumed as a matter of course. Often they stressed the very moment when the change took place. "About a quarter to nine" Wesley wrote in his journal of the great change which took place in his life. He was present at a Moravian meeting, and at a quarter to nine felt his heart strangely warmed. In orthodox circles there is a tendency to date this religious experience by the clock. In the New Testament there are some examples of sudden conversion—notably Saul of Tarsus and the Philippian gaoler. These and similar cases of sudden conversion led the evangelicals to think that this was the one mould in which normal Christian experience was to run, and led them to look with suspicion on any other type of religious experience. Sudden conversion, however, is the exception and not the rule. The great majority of Christians pass through no such experience. Their religious life is developed by easy and gradual stages, and they are never conscious of any violent crisis, nor are they able to point to any precise moment when they felt a radical change of life. With other people it is different. Their religious awakening is accompanied by some violent emotional upheaval.

A writer on "The Psychology of Alcoholism"—Dr. G. B. Cutten—bears witness to sudden conversion. "Most conversions of alcoholics are of a sudden nature. Few, if any, cases are recorded among conversions of the deliberate type."

Robert Browning also bears similar testimony.

> "For the main criminal I have no hope
> Except in such a suddenness of fate."

There are people, as for instance, Saul Kane, in John Masefield's Everlasting Mercy, who have embarked on a life of conscious evil, which, unless suddenly changed, is likely to continue until life is wasted.

## II.—Types of Sudden Conversion.

There are two main types of conversion:

(1). This is largely intellectual, involving much serious reasoning and definite searching after some coveted ideal, and results in a new birth, which makes the searcher an entirely new creature.

(2). The other is the more conventional type of conversion, which is largely emotional, the chief factor being that of feeling.

Rabindranath Tagore is a typical example of the former type, and his experience is very valuable, as it comes to us at first hand. One morning with dramatic suddenness the veil seemed to be withdrawn from his eyes, and he saw what he calls "the inner soul of reality." Tagore himself describes the scene. He was standing on a verandah looking at the trees in the gardens.

"The sun was slowly rising above the screen of the leaves, and as I was watching it," he says, "suddenly in a moment, a veil seemed to be lifted from my eyes. I found the world wrapped in an inexpressible glory, with its waves of joy and beauty bursting and breaking on all sides. The thick shroud of sorrow that lay on my heart in many folds was pierced through and through by the light of the world. Everything became luminous. I was full of gladness, full of love. God, the great Giver, can open the whole universe to our gaze in the narrow space of a single lane."

That is the experience which came to Tagore in a sudden dramatic way, and he felt a joyous enlightenment. It is true that the final experience came suddenly. It would also be true to say that it came to a mind prepared by years of searching. When he reached years of discretion, Tagore experienced a need of something greater and of more practical and moral worth than his old native faith supplied. This sense of emptiness of his life and faith increased on the death of his grandmother, to whom he owed his upbringing, and he felt the world to him dead and gloomy. He began his quest for something bigger than he had ever known—a satisfying power to rule his life, and at last the revelation came. The intellectual process was slow, but the final consummation was sudden. The change that was wrought was of the heart as well as of the head, and was influenced by feeling as well as by the intellect, though the latter was the chief factor.

The case of John Bunyan exemplifies the emotional conversion experience. He lived

at a time when Puritanism was at its height and was taught to expect that conversion would come to him in a sudden dramatic way, and that if it did not, his soul would go to hell and suffer eternal damnation. Such a doctrine naturally aroused great fears in his heart. He was obsessed with an overburdening sense of sin, which he had been taught was inherent in every human being, and feared lest he should never have the experience of conversion, which he was led to believe was absolutely essential and the only means of being saved. In these years of storm and stress Bunyan had many wretched experiences, sometimes sinking to the depths of despair when he recalled verses of the Bible, predicting the terrible fate of sinners, sometimes being cheered by the more comforting verses of the Bible. It was always a matter of the way he felt, till at last one set of feelings got the mastery over the others. Peace suddenly came to his troubled mind. In the case of John Bunyan both intellect and emotion were concerned, though feeling was paramount.

Actual cases of the same experience are found in the lives of St. Augustine, Sadhu Sundar Singh, Buddha, St. Francis and others. Those who have felt this experience have given it different names. Paul calls it "Christ," Bunyan speaks of it as "the grace of God," Tagore calls it "the inner soul of reality." The names do not matter, the experience is all important.

### III.—Conversion always a Process.

Conversion may appeal to the outside world as being an instantaneous occurrence, but is always the result of a process, going on consciously or unconsciously in the mind. While a person's life is pursuing its ordinary course, there appears to be a sudden and dramatic change. A new life emerges, taking the place of the ordinary life, but if we only knew, a gradual change has been going on for years.

The classic example of sudden conversion is the case of St. Paul. Saul the Pharisee, on the road to Damascus, saw a vision, which suddenly changed his life from an opponent of Christianity to one of its strongest advocates. From the writings of St. Paul we gather that for years he had been dissatisfied with legal religion ; that he was searching for something better ; that he had been profoundly influenced by the teaching and the witness of the Christians. The cumulative effect of these things was to prepare the mind for the change, and on the road to Damascus, when the suggestion came to him that in Christianity he could find greater satisfaction than in Judaism, the change took place.

Similarly, in the case of Tagore and Bunyan, both men were enduring a period of unrest ; both knew what they wanted, and were not content till they had found it, and became new creatures. They were responding to influences, which had been exerted upon their lives at various intervals but had not previously borne fruit.

### IV.—Sudden Conversions Explained.

One of the most valuable movements in science to-day is that which is investigating the mind. For centuries the mind of man has studied all things in earth, sky and sea. Now it is turning in upon itself. All of us realise that our minds work in many ways of which we are unaware. The conscious mind is a very small part of the whole mind. It is that part which goes on through the day attending to the various things that interest us. We exercise our conscious mind in reading. It requires a conscious effect of the will. At the same time there is another part of the mind which stores up memories, which are often recalled to us in our dreams, fancies, fears, in our absent-mindedness, and when we blurt out things we did not intend to say. It is active when people talk in their sleep, and when coming round after an anæsthetic. The unconscious mind is thus a kind of background to the conscious. Ideas and images in the conscious mind fade away into the unconscious. Names of people and places sink deeper and deeper into the unconscious mind, and the deeper they get the more difficult it is to recall them. The unconscious mind is that part of the mind which receives impressions, ideas, and stores them up till one day they float into consciousness again, transforming a man's life so that he becomes a new creature.

In Harold Begbie's book, "Twice Born Men," he relates instances of men, who have

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**N.B.—Editorial Communications should be sent to the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, 19 Wellington Park Avenue, Belfast.**

**Phone—Malone 378.**

**Contributions must be in the Editor's hands not later than the 20th of the month.**

been confirmed drunkards, yet in response to a certain influence or appeal have appeared to be suddenly changed for the better. It would be difficult to explain how such drastic changes could occur were it not for the fact that ideas which have been dormant for many years are recalled and placed in the forefront of the mind. A shock often brings up the same kind of action. A sudden facing of death may have the same effect.

Consider a typical case. A man who is a drunkard goes to a mission hall. He listens! Something seizes his attention—a word of the preacher, or the song of the soloist, or the words of a hymn. Old thoughts are awakened in his mind and brought up from the deep, thoughts not dwelt upon for years past. In a moment he sees his father, mother, childhood, his sin, God and the future. These new ideas come into the focus of his mind with such tremendous impulse that he is a new creature. All things are new. There is a sudden transformation, but the change is due to influences which have been silently and secretly at work throughout life.

This explanation of the workings of the human mind is not universally accepted. Much of it is as yet uncertain. But there is a point that need not be emphasised. What is uncertain to-day may be certain to-morrow. Half a century ago many people proclaimed that the theory of evolution made great assumptions; that much of it was uncertain. Now we recognise that evolution is simply an explanation of the way God works. As the oak develops from the acorn by natural processes in co-operation with the forces of nature, so it may be that the finest experiences of men come through the natural workings of the human mind in co-operation with God.

—o—

Whatever we feel justly we ought to shape; whatever we think, to give it clear form; whatever we have inside us, our duty is to mould it outside of ourselves into clear speech or act, which, if it be loving, will be luminous.

*Stopford Brooke.*

—o—

"If thou seest a man of understanding, get thee betimes unto him, and let thy foot wear out the steps of his door."

—*Ecclesiasticus VI*, 36.

## Remonstrant Synod of Ulster.

FOUNDED 25TH MAY, 1830.

A Centenary service in connection with the above will be held in the First Presbyterian Church, Dunmurry, on Sunday, May 25th, 1930, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Preacher: Rev. A. Gordon, M.A.

Organist: Mr. Albert Taylor, L.R.A.M. A.R.C.M.

Soloists: Miss V. E. Curran, L.R.A.M. and Mr. J. A. Laird.

The collection will be for the expenses and the Repair Fund of the church property.

Leaflets are being sent to all congregations. Tea will be served immediately after the service.

## Sunday School Conference.

The Annual Sunday School Conference will be held at Holywood on Saturday, June 7th. A paper will be read by Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D., Mountpottinger. Further particulars will be sent to each congregation at a later date.

## Sunday School Essays.

The following subjects have been chosen for the Essay Competitions for 1930:—

1. Kindness to animals.
2. Why I love Jesus.
3. My favourite character in the Old Testament.
4. Why I go to Sunday School.
5. The work of the Rev. Dr. Henry Montgomery of Dunmurry.

A special prize is also offered for the best essay on—"The Past, Present, and Future of our Church."

Essays to be written on one side of the paper only.

The name, age, and the Sunday School which the competitor attends must be written on the front page, which must contain nothing in addition. Essay to commence on the second page, the front page to be detachable.

All Essays must reach me not later than Saturday, 10th May, 1930.

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## League of Youth.

### A THIRD APPEAL.

There seems to be many pessimists in our body. I am not fond of pessimists for you seldom find them helpful. Though they are often quite eloquent in telling you that things are wrong or bad, they are usually singularly incapable of going any further into the matter and suggesting means of righting the wrong. Life is too short, and I am too busy to bother about them. I won't say that I am an optimist, but a pessimist bores me, and I generally succeed in soon forgetting him (or her). I have received letters from two pessimists.

It is quite true that this League of Youth is slow, very slow, in starting, but I know it will come, and when it is in working order it will be the happiest and healthiest organization in our Church. EVERYBODY WILL WANT TO JOIN IT THEN. And not only will its members be enjoying themselves in their social activities (camping out, travels, dancing, lectures, sports, etc.), but it will be doing some very good, valuable work in helping to strengthen and weld our churches.

I know I am right here, because it is to be the League of Youth—and that is the spirit of youth.

I had hoped that our first meeting would be held before the Synod met in June, and now I am doubtful whether we shall be in a position to do so. Why are you not giving me your names? I have only two more since last month!—about twenty altogether. One correspondent wrote me that I should not hear from you until I wrote to you all individually. I would like him to explain to me how I could do this without first receiving your names.

Young people of our churches! Once again I appeal to you not to hesitate to give me your names. Don't be so slow in starting our new move. ENROL NOW, and we will decide details together.

Look up "your Non-Subscribing Presbyterian" for last month and March, if you have not already done so, and read, and let me hear from you by the 16th May.

P. GODDING,
The Manse,
Banbridge,
19th April, 1930

## Farewell at Clough.

At the close of the service on Easter Sunday the church bade farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Newell and family of Magheraleggan, on their departure for Canada. Mr. Hugh Shaw, Secretary, in the name of the congregation, presented to Mr. Newell a book entitled "Round the World on Fifty Pounds," with a suitable inscription, and afterwards read the following letter of farewell:—

Easter Sunday, 1930.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Newell,

It is with deep regret that we say good-bye—that is, God be with you—on this day of sacred memories. We regret that you and your family are leaving sweet County Down to settle in Canada. We shall miss your fellowship with us in our little church at Clough. We shall miss your presence at the hour of worship on the Sabbath day and at Communion time. The Sabbath-school teachers will miss the presence of your boys at class on Sabbath mornings. The distance they had to travel to school every Sabbath morn did not prevent them from establishing a record in attendance which will be remembered in the days to come.

But we would not say farewell only with regret. We would say it also with hope and good wishes for the happiness and prosperity of you all in the land of your adoption. God be with you all. Next Sabbath Day, when you and yours will be sailing away to the land of your hopes and dreams, we shall remember you in our prayers, in our little church, and on the second Sunday in May at Communion time. We shall not forget you and all our absent brethren. We feel sure that wherever you are you will give us a thought and a prayer in your heart at these solemn times as you remember "the days that are no more."

We would also join in sending good wishes to your relatives and friends now settled in Canada, to whom you are going, and who still have a little bit of Ireland in their hearts to give you welcome.

Signed by us on behalf of Clough Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.

JAS. SHAW BROWN, (Minister).
HUGH SHAW (Secretary).
SAMUEL ROBINSON (Treasurer).
MARGARET HAY (Women's League.)

### 1st CHURCH BRANCH WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The work for this branch for the Session is almost concluded. Two work meetings were held on March 19th and 26th. On April 2nd Mrs. Hume, O.B.E., gave a most enjoyable "cookery talk" and on April 9th, Mrs. Ewbank, Mountpottinger, gave a very thoughtful address on "The Work of Present Day Women." These addresses were very much enjoyed, and hearty votes of thanks were passed to both ladies.

The Annual Meeting will be held on May 7th, at 8 p.m., when it is hoped there will be a large attendance of members.

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### WOMEN'S LEAGUE—STANHOPE STREET BRANCH.

On Monday, April 14th, this branch was entertained to the closing tea for the Winter Session by members of the 1st Church Branch at the Mission. Miss Jeannie Erskine delighted the company with her inimitable character sketches. Mrs. Robert Wilkinson brought a gramophone, and Mrs. Leslie Hay acted as pianist. Competitive games were also enjoyed. The thanks of the members was suitably expressed by Mrs. E. R. Jackson, Miss Armstrong responding.

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### WOMEN'S LEAGUE—LARNE BRANCH.

Members of the Ulster District League were entertained by the above branch at Larne on Saturday, April 12th. A large party travelled from Belfast by reserved carriages on the L.M.S., and were joined by Ballycarry and Ballyclare members at the school-room. Mrs. Begg presided, and a happy afternoon was spent in competitive games and musical and dramatic items. Members were present from Holywood, Banbridge, Comber, Ballycarry, Ballyclare, and the three Belfast branches. The thanks of the guests were expressed by Miss Armstrong, President, Ulster District League.


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## BELFAST CHAPTER

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**OBJECTS** (inter alia).

To encourage laymen to take a more active part in the work of the Churches.

To form a bond of union and closer co-operation between the members of the various congregations.

The Committee invite those who are not already members to join. The minimum subscription is 2/6, and further particulars may be obtained from—

MR. J. H. GILLILAND,

35 Rosemary St., Belfast, Hon. Sec.,

MR. J. EDMONDSON, Jr., Asst. Hon Sec.

19 Lime Street, Belfast.

## Holy Ghost Day.

By Ullin.

Holy Gheist—the Holy Breath, Paraclete—the Energiser, the Inspirer—more than Comforter. The old Anglo-Saxon word was Pfingsten, which means Holy Ghost. This became Whitsun, and Whitsun Day is Holy Ghost Day. A very common idea about it is that Whitsunday is a corruption of White Sunday, because of the white dresses, which in some places are worn by girls on that day. Lancashire is one of the places where that custom is observed. In the early days of the Church Whitsun-day was the day on which many people chose to be baptised, and candidates for baptism were robed in white. The root of the word candidate means "white." Properly speaking, the accent should be on "day" and not on "sun."

Whitsunday is preceded by Ascension Day. The two festivals come so close together that one holiday suffices. Origen, who is said to have been the greatest of the Church Fathers, did not deny that the events recorded in the Gospels occurred, but considered that their value to us was that they are symbols of spiritual facts which occur in the life of every Christian man. That being so, they are eternally true for us, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Church at Pentecost is the story of the Church depressed and disheartened by the loss of the bodily presence of its Divine Master, and having to face a hostile, cynical, unbelieving world. But, while they were met together the Holy Power descended on them, and they went forward with fearless courage in the strength and inspiration which now possessed them; they had received the baptism of fire. The Celt may say of the speaker or singer, "He has the true fire." A Catholic will speak of the power, which he believes transmutes the sacred elements on the altar as "the fire." "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" are the words used in ordination. They were the words used by Christ when he sent forth his disciples and breathed on them, saying: "Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

"Great Paraclete! to Thee we cry;
Oh highest gift of God most high!
O living Fount! O Fire! O Love!
And sweet anointing from above.
Thou in Thy sevenfold gifts are known;
Thee, Finger of God's Hand, we own;
The promise of the Father, Thou
Who dost the tongue with power endow."

Whitsunday brings to a close the first half of the Christian year. As the Jews had a sacred half and a secular half of their year, one half being that in which the great feasts occurred, so the ancient Church divided its year into two, the first half being devoted to the events in the life of Christ, the second half to reviewing and consolidating the work of the first half. In our own prayer books, the Christian Year is thus arranged for.

The bane of Christian worship is the selfishness of the worshippers. They place themselves in a passive attitude, as though the purpose of the service was to entertain and edify them. There is an old expression, "The priesthood of the laity," which means that in worship, service is being rendered to God and to man. A service rightly carried out, has effects far beyond the immediate congregation and the immediate hour. It means what the Egyptians called "the hidden work," the united exercise of the mighty power of thought. That ought not to need to be argued for in these days, when every day we are wielding unseen forces, when Marconi from the Mediterranean can light the lamps in Sydney in Australia.

Manchester again will have its world-famed Sunday-school processions, when


# The Inquirer and Christian Life.

**With which is incorporated The Unitarian Herald.**

**A Journal of Free Religious Fellowship and Organ of Unitarian Christianity.**

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thousands of children take part. Churches will begin their big meetings. On the outer side there will be a great deal that will hold public attention, but what pen can describe the glory of the inner side?

May inner and outer be rightly blended, and new hope and vigour and strength come to us this Holy Ghost Day.

## The Lady of the Lamp.

**Soldier's Letter From The Crimea.**

"What a comfort it was to see Florence Nightingale go by; she would speak to one and nod to another; she could not do it to all you know for we were lying there by hundreds, but we could kiss her shadow as it fell, and lay our heads on our pillows again content."

**Where He Would Go.**

When the Lady of the Lamp reached home she took with her a little Russian orphan boy who came as a wounded prisoner to her hospital. She arranged for his education and one day one of his teachers asked him where he would go when he died if he was a good boy. "To Miss Nightingale," he answered.

**A Story of a Story.**

"One beautiful starlit night I told my little neice the story of Florence Nightingale. I told—with the details children love—of Florence Nightingale's resolve, the enrolment of other nurses, the collecting of stores, the embarkation, the hospital. I described the scene when darkness fell and how men called her the Lady of the Lamp, When my story was ended the child asked. "Where is Florence Nightingale now?" "In heaven with God," I said. "What does she do now?" the little girl persisted. "I don't know," I replied. This appeared to both of us most unsatisfactory. After a few moment's serious reflection the little girl suddenly burst out "I know; I expect she lights God's stars for Him."

—From the All Souls' Church Calendar for March.

—o—

"There is more than one path up the hill of the Lord. It is only from the top we may see that the paths meet and the view is the same." —*Dean Inge.*

## Confucian Religion.

Mr. J. Edkins, a well-known Christian missionary in China, draws attention in one of his books (Religion of China) to what he considers to be a defect in the Chinese Religion. These are his words:—

> "An ethical test is the only one they know. When the evidence of a new religion is presented to them, they at once refer it to a moral standard, and give their approval with the utmost readiness if it passes the test. They do not ask whether it is divine, but whether it is good."

If this is a defect in Chinese religion (and there is something to be said both for and against it according to one's religious views) one is quite justified in saying that if Christianity had occasionally suffered from a similar defect, its history would make better reading.

If Christians had asked "is it good?" and obeyed their higher natures, instead of asking "is it divine?" and obeying the Biblical text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," thousands of innocent women would have been spared horrible deaths at the stake.

Slavery was supported long after it should have been abolished, not because people thought it was good, but partly because it so happened that the writers of the Christian Divine Book regarded slavery as right and proper.

If Christianity had had more ethical tests and fewer theological tests, more pragmatic standards, and fewer doctrinal standards, or in other words, if Christianity had asked more often "what is good?" and less often "what is divine?" its history would make much better reading.

### MAN'S NATURE.

At the core of the Confucian religion is the conviction that man is born good, that he is good by nature, and that evil is foreign to him. This, of course, is exactly opposite to the Christian belief (or perhaps one should say the supposed Christian belief, because very few educated people subscribe to the doctrine even in theory), that man is born in sin; that he is evil by nature, and can become good only by some supernatural process.

The mainspring of Confucian ethics is the conviction that human nature is good, and that it can by its own efforts, without supernatural intervention, rise to great spiritual and moral heights.

For this reason it is sometimes said that the teaching of Confucius is secular and not religious; that Confucianism is a high moral code and not a religion.

It all depends on one's point of view.

If one thinks of God only as a great power working from without in some supernatural way, then the teaching that man can by his own efforts rise to great heights, may be regarded as secular. If, however, one thinks of God as a Great Universal Spirit working in some mysterious way from within, then such teaching is the very essence of true religion.

### PRACTICAL MORALITY.

It is as a teacher of practical morality that Confucius wins his fame and the allegiance of over 350 million followers in this twentieth century. A distinctive feature of his teaching is the Golden Rule, which appears in China five centuries before it appears in Palestine.

It is wrong to say that Confucius taught the Golden Rule only in its negative aspect. He understood it in its positive aspect as his teaching clearly shows.

The savings of Confucius, written down by disciples years after his death, just as the sayings of Jesus were written by disciples years after his death, have gone far towards moulding Chinese character.

Thousands of Chinese scholars can repeat all the Confucian maxims, and the masses of the people know many of them by heart.

If we think there is a wide difference between the conduct of present-day Confucianism and the teaching of its founder, and no one will deny that the difference exists, we might be inclined to be more charitable by remembering that exactly the same criticism can be made against Christianity.

### DEFECTS AND VIRTUES.

Confucianism has its defects (for instance, it can never fully satisfy the cravings of man's spiritual nature), but it contains many virtues that will always be essential to the happiness and welfare of the human race. Its central doctrine, that man is born good, and that he is not by nature corrupt, is one that might with profit be incorporated into the Christian religion.

Confucianism doesn't belittle human nature as something sinful that man has been saddled with; it belauds human nature as something good with which man has been blessed. For this reason it insists on self culture as the only way to "have life and have it more abundantly."

It knows of no approach to God except by way of man. It knows of no Divine attributes apart from the highest human attributes. In its search for the highest good, it does not ascend into the highest heaven, but descends into the depths of the human heart. The words "love of God" are meaningless unless preceded by the words "love of man."

Nearly six centuries after these doctrines appeared in China they appeared in Palestine, and were put into Christian terminology by at least one New Testament writer. "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

S. P. W.

## Subsidy Fund.

The Treasurer acknowledges with thanks, a donation of £1 from "A Friend" to the Subsidy Fund.

## Reports.

**Banbridge.**—At the Monthly Meeting of the Women's League, held on 25th March, Mrs. Godding presided over a very good attendance of members. A "Bring and Buy" Sale had been arranged, and the members responded loyally. Besides being a financial success, the selling of the articles provided much merriment and helped to make the meeting one of the most successful and enjoyable which this Branch has yet held.

**Cairncastle.**—On 21st of March there was a party in the school-room of the Old Meeting House, given by the minister and his wife—or two parties merging into one. The children of the congregation had been invited to arrive fairly early in the afternoon, and to take their departure between 7 and 7-30, when the older young people were to take their places. It may have been an unusual experiment, but it is believed to have given satisfaction to all the company (or to the two companies) concerned.

On the 27th of the same month a "concert," or miscellaneous entertainment, was

given in the Cairncastle Lecture Hall for the benefit of the Old Meeting House. The programme may be said to have consisted of two sections. One, provided by a group of friends, most of whom were connected with various congregations in Larne, the other, by a troupe of young men, for sufficiently guessable reasons known as "Cairn Blacks," many of whom were connected with the local congregation of Subscribing Presbyterians, whose organist, Miss Agnes Aiken, acted as their pianist throughout. They were also extensively indebted to Mr. Robert Crawford of the Old Meeting House, for the ingenious and amusing apparatus he had constructed as adjuncts to their performances on the stage. The Larne friends had been got together by Miss Martha Huxley, of the Non-Subscribing Congregation in that town. It is the fourth year in succession that Miss Huxley has rendered such sisterly aid to her brethren in Cairncastle.

**Holywood.**—A small Sale of Work to assist church funds was held on Friday, April 4th. It was organised by the Sewing Circle, assisted by ladies of the congregation. The following is a list of the stallholders, etc.:—Needlework, etc., Mrs. W. Patterson and Mrs. James Sharnon, jun.; Cakes, etc.—Mrs. R. Steele, Mrs. W. J. Harvey, and Mrs. Hugh Shannon, jun.; White Elephants—Mrs. Omar C. Nelson, Miss Nelson and Miss Malcolm; Sweets—Mrs. Lockhart, Mrs. Robinson and Miss E. Meneely; Groceries—etc., Mrs. W. Shannon and Mrs. Armstrong; Flowers and Vegetables—Misses Betty and Molly Paterson, Master W. Patterson and Miss Peggy Shannon; Teas—Mrs. Sharman D. Neill, Mrs. Ronald Williams, Misses K. and U. Neill and Miss Jean Shannon; Bagatelle—Mr. K. Robinson; Bean Bag—Mr. H. Shannon, jun. The sum raised was over £72.

**Mountpottinger.**

At the Annual Meeting held in March, the chairman promised that before long the installation of the electric lighting would be an accomplished fact. The work is now well forward, and it is hoped to have the light in use at the evening service on May 5th. It will certainly be much appreciated by the congregation as a whole. Emigration is still responsible for reductions in our ranks, and the most recent departure is that of Miss Jessie Johnston, who has gone to join other members of her family in the United States. As a member of the choir, who had graduated from the Sunday-school, she will be undoubtedly missed, but we hope this uprooting will be to her ultimate benefit.

Mountpottinger.—The Girls' Club, which is affiliated with the Mountpottinger Branch of the Women's League, concluded its first session on Monday, 14th April by having a social tea. A very happy evening was spent. During tea Mrs. Ewbank was the recipient of a little gift from the girls as a token of their affection, and appreciation of the deep interest she has taken in them. The presentation was gracefully made by Miss Nora Martin. Mrs. Ewbank thanked the members, and said the work of the session had afforded her great pleasure, and she was delighted with the progress made by each one. During the session very many useful articles of an artistic nature have been made under the tuition of Mrs. Ewbank.

## Obituaries.

### Miss Margaret M'Vicker.

To the older members of our Mountpottinger congregation the brief advertisement appearing in the "Belfast News-Letter" of April 8th, which announced the death of Miss M'Vicker at her home in Blackrock, Melbourne, came as a great surprise. Two years ago she visited her old friends, this being the first trip home since her departure to Australia some 18 years before, and she then attended our services as often as possible. After leaving Belfast she joined some Australian friends on a Continental trip, but was obliged to return to London earlier than arranged owing to indisposition. Subsequently she underwent a rather serious operation, but had apparently recovered from this when she sailed for Australia a few months later. In December last information came that another operation had been necessary in July, but her nieces reported that she was once again recovered. Miss M'Vicker was a very staunch member of Mountpottinger, and an excellent worker. It is almost entirely due to her efforts that some of the church furniture now in use was obtained, and fortunately this is of a character that will serve as a memorial to her memory. To her relatives, who are for the most part now in the Melbourne district, we tender our sincere sympathy.

### Miss Letitia Gilmore.

Gilmore is an honoured name on the Ards, and means "Servant of Mary," as Gillespie means "Servant of the Bishop," "gillie" being the Scots name for "servant." Ballyhemlin has lost a devoted member in the decease of Miss Gilmore, who passed away somewhat suddenly at the last on Tuesday morning, March 18th. Miss Gilmore was mistress of a school in Belfast, and retired a few years ago to a bungalow she had built on the sea-shore at Roddens, close to her brother's farm. She exercised a quiet, widespread influence for good, and was universally respected in the district. The funeral service at the house and in the burying-ground at Greyabbey was conducted by the Rev. J. Barron.

### John Hamilton.

The congregation at Crumlin has suffered another heavy loss in the death of Mr. John Hamilton. He was our secretary for many years, serving his church faithfully, keenly and gladly. He had lived a full life and reached a ripe age; and if he felt that the younger generation was not so strong for the things that he held dear, that at least is understandable. Certainly, those who knew him could not help feeling a deep respect for his character, and we all mourn him as one who was loyal and true. He leaves an elder sister, a niece and a nephew at Crumlin, and numbers of friends to carry on the work in which he found great joy.

### Khasi Hills Unitarian Ministers' Fund.

As no other subscriptions towards the above fund from Ulster Unitarians were forthcoming, Mrs. E. R. Jackson forwarded a cheque for eight pounds to the General Assembly Hon. Treasurer.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mrs. A. B. Woodhouse | £3 | 0 | 0 |
| Miss Hutton .. | 5 | 0 | 0 |

## Congregations of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

**Belfast.**—First Church, Rosemary Street, 11-30 and 7, Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.
" All Souls', Elmwood Avenue, 11-30 and 7, Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.
" Mountpottinger Unitarian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D.
" York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A.

**Dublin.**—Unitarian Church, Stephen's Green, 12 and 7, Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A.

**Antrim.**—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. George V. Crook.

**Ballee.**—Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m., Rev. Joseph H. Bibby.

**Ballycarry.**—Presbyterian Old Meeting House, 12 noon, and 7 p.m. occasional Sundays. Rev. William G. Marsden.

**Ballyclare.**—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A.

**Ballyhemlin.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. John Barron.

**Ballymoney.**—The Remonstrant Meeting House, 12-15 p.m., Rev. Felix Holt, B.A.

**Banbridge.**—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

**Cairncastle.**—Old Meeting House. 12-15 p.m., Rev. Eustace Thompson.

**Clough.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m.—Rev. J. Shaw Brown.

**Comber.**—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 (October to April), Rev. J. Glynne Davies.

**Cork.**—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, and 7 p.m., Rev. W. A. Weatherall.

**Crumlin.**—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Evening Service monthly, 7-15, Rev. G. Price-Jones.

**Downpatrick.**—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m., Supply.

**Dromore.**—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6 p.m., Rev. Alfred Davison.

**Dunmurry.**—First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church, 1 noon, Rev. John A. Kelly.

**Glenarm.**—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A.

**Greyabbey.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon (6 p.m. November to February), Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.

**Holywood.**—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. Edgar Lockett.

**Killinchy.**—Remonstrant Presbyterian Church, 12-15 p.m., and 7 p.m., occasional Sundays, Rev. David J. Williams.

**Larne.**—Old Presbyterian Church (Unitarian), 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. James Kennedy and Rev. John Begg.

**Moira.**—First Presbyterian Church, 3-15 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.

**Moneyrea.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church 12 o'clock noon.—Rev. J. Dare Davies.

**Newry.**—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 7 p.m. (October to May), Rev. G. J. Slipper.

**Newtownards.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 3-30 p.m., Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A

**Rademon.**—First Kilmore Remonstrant Church, 12-15 p.m., Rev. John J. Magill, B.A.

**Raloo.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. John M'Cleery.

**Templepatrick.**—Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. Alfred Turner.

**Warrenpoint.**—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.—Services fortnightly, October to May, at 3-30 p.m.—Rev. G. J. Slipper.

**Will Ministers and Church Secretaries please advise the Editor of any mistakes in the above details.**

# Ulster Unitarian Christian Association.

Hon. Secretary—REV. G. J. SLIPPER, 7 TREVOR HILL, NEWRY.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL ESSAY COMPETITION

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